

FEATURED THIS ISSUE

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JACKSONVILLE:

Shands Jacksonville/
University of Florida
655 West 8th Street
Box C-23
Jacksonville, FL 32209
904.244.4465 office
904.244.4063 fax
www.fpicijax.org

MIAMI:

Jackson Memorial Hospital
University of Miami
Miller School of Medicine
Institute Annex, 3rd Floor
1611 NW 12th Avenue
Miami, FL 33136
305-585-5250 office
305-545-9762 fax
www.miamipoison.org

TAMPA:

Tampa General Hospital
One Davis Medical Building,
Suite 203
Tampa, Florida 33606
813.844.7044 office
813.844.4443 fax
www.poisoncentertampa.org

**AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF POISON CONTROL
CENTERS**

515 King St.
Suite 510
Alexandria, VA. 22314
www.aapcc.org

Be Poison-Smart When Buying a Home

Buying a home can be a stressful experience in and of itself, with home inspections, offers and counter-offers and closings creating a bureaucratic minefield for buyers. But if you think that’s stressful, try buying a house only to realize that there are a myriad of health hazards to fix.

Lead, radon, mold are among the toxins that can make a new home a headache and a hazard.

The Florida Poison Information Center Network and the American Association of Poison Control Centers want home-buyers to shop smart when they look for a new place to dwell. Here are a few things to look for when you’re shopping for a new house – or items to invest in when you’re moving in.



Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors

- Make sure homes have carbon monoxide and smoke detectors; you won’t be able to see this invisible gas otherwise. If your house doesn’t have them, buy them. Some municipalities have rules about how many to have and where to put them. Put carbon monoxide detectors near bedrooms, and make sure their batteries are replaced regularly.

- Know which fuel-burning appliances and equipment can be a source of carbon monoxide poisoning if not vented and/or maintained properly.

- Know the history of the appliances and heating system in the home. Gather service records if possible. Knowing a little about your appliances and heating system can help you know when it’s appropriate to replace

furnaces, water heaters, gas dryers, wood-burning stoves and gas ranges, which all pose carbon monoxide risks.

Lead

- Know the age of your home.

Homes built before 1950 are highly likely to contain lead paint and homes built before 1978 may also contain this toxic paint.

- Look for paint chips or flaking lead-based paint. Window sills and doorways are common locations.

- Test for lead hazards in the home including the soil. Tests can be purchased at home improvement stores.

Mold

- Look for signs of water problems like leaking pipes or faucets, wet areas, musty smells, water stains or high humidity.

(SEE REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS PAGE 5)

Fake Pot, Fake Cocaine: Very Real, Very Dangerous

One is marketed as “fake marijuana.” The other is advertised as “fake cocaine” or “fake meth.” Both were, initially, sold under the premise of being legal equivalents to illegal drugs.

But both are causing side effects that are generating a slew of calls to poison centers and spurring concern among doctors and clinicians at U.S. poison centers.

Poison centers first began taking calls about “synthetic marijuana” in late 2009. The substances sold for between \$30 and \$40 per three-gram bag, in packages labeled as incense or potpourri, and were marketed under brand names including “Spice,” “K2,” “Genie,” “Yucatan Fire,” “Sence,” “Smoke,” “Skunk” and “Zohai.”

Then, late last year, poison centers began to receive calls about products marketed as “bath salts” being sold both on the Internet as well as in gas stations and head shops. Packaging is usually a plastic bag filled with a white granular powder. The products are known by names including “Red Dove,” “Blue Silk,” “Zoom,” “Bloom,” “Cloud 9,” “Ocean



Snow,” “Lunar Wave,” “Vanilla Sky,” “Ivory Wave,” “White Lightning,” “Scarface” and “Hurricane Charlie.” They produce in-

creased heart rate, increased blood pressure, agitation, hallucinations, extreme paranoia and delusions.

A few tips on these products and the dangers surrounding

them:

- Parents of teens should be on the lookout for such products in their children’s bedrooms and backpacks. Be particularly skeptical of products labeled “incense” or “bath salts.”
- Be aware of the signs and symptoms of drug use in loved ones: paranoia, changes in personality, agitation and anxiety are among the symptoms reported by users of these substances.
- Talk with family members about the dangers of these products. Don’t be fooled by the ready availability and legal status of new “designer drugs.” These products are not a “safe” or harmless alternative to other illicit drugs of abuse. Many can cause hallucinations and agitation that poison center officials say represents the opposite of a “mellow high.” In the case of bath salts, poison center officials report instances of severe paranoia that caused users to harm themselves and others.
- Keep your poison center’s number near your phone: 1-800-222-1222. Remember: You can call your poison center to ask about these substances even if you have not been exposed to them.



The American Association of Poison Control Centers supports the nation’s 57 poison control centers in their efforts to prevent poisoning. Poison centers offer free and confidential services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you believe you’ve been exposed to a poison or have questions about whether a substance is poisonous, call the experts at your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

Carbon Monoxide: Odorless, Colorless, Tasteless and Deadly

Carbon monoxide – odorless, colorless and tasteless - is a deadly hazard all year round.

All fuel-burning equipment and appliances create the risk for carbon monoxide, including water heaters, wood and gas fireplaces, generators and automobile engines.

At its mildest, carbon monoxide poisoning can feel a little like the flu – causing headaches, dizziness, ex-

haustion, confusion, fainting and vomiting.

But at its worst, exposure to carbon monoxide can be fatal. In 2008, exposure to carbon monoxide resulted in 47 U.S. deaths, according to data from the American Association of Poison Control Centers. U.S. poison centers took 14,461 calls about carbon monoxide exposure in 2008.

(SEE CARBON MONOXIDE PAGE 4)

FPICN Provides Outreach Activities for NPPW

As the nation prepared to celebrate the 49th National Poison Prevention Week 2011, the Florida Poison Information Center Network education offices joined in to provide activities across the state, National Poison Prevention Week, which is held annually during the third



From left, Nora Ayubi and Juan Hincapie Castillo educate a family at Nemours Children's Clinic for FPIC-Jacksonville.

week in March, is designed to raise awareness of the dangers of poisonings. More than 4 million poisonings are reported to the American Association of Poison Control Centers yearly and more than 83% of these poisonings occur at home.

The Florida/USVI Poison Information Center-Jacksonville hosted several activities including a regional poster contest with 401 posters being submitted to the contest. Fifty-nine of the posters were selected for professional judging and 18 will be submitted to the Poison Prevention Week Council to be judged at the national level. To close out the week, the education staff, Specialists in Poison Information, and pharmacy students with the Northeast Florida Society of Health System Pharmacists provided outreach at the Orange Park Mall, the Avenues Mall, St. Johns Town Center, and the Nemours Children's Clinic to promote Poison Center services, provide information, and free educational materials. It is safe to estimate that several thousand individuals had opportunity to view the displays and learn more about how to become poison-safe.

With the theme of *Poison Prevention is for People of all Ages*, the Florida Poison Information Center - Tampa kicked off the week with an event at the Glazer Children's Museum in downtown Tampa. The museum



Shirley Rendon from FPIC - Tampa shows spiders and snakes to visitors at Glazer Museum.

was filled with family who petted snakes, danced the stingray shuffle and learned to escape from fire and smoke. The museum education director said, "I've never seen exhibitors that cared so much about teaching children." Each exhibit and presentation was designed with kids in mind. The team of educators came from Tampa Fire Rescue, Safe Kids, Healthy Homes program, county health department Lead Program, county parks/recreation, master gardeners and the poison centers of Miami and Tampa.

The rest of the week, the Florida Poison Information Center - Tampa reached out to people of many ages and backgrounds. Senior citizens discussed ways to take medications safely; Hispanic residents discovered the effects of household poisons on children and pets; Safe Kids health educators learned tips about teaching poison safety; Tampa General Hospital employees visited a display about Florida's prescription drug crisis; Sarasota Doctor's Hospital employees

got an update on trends in overdoses and treatment; LECOM pharmacy students played "What's Your Poison IQ?"; City of Ocoee employees were amazed by a display about venomous creatures; and, Pasco County School Nurses got motivated to fight drug abuse after learning about energy drinks, bath salts and 2 C-E.

The initiative, "Program Your Phone for Poison Help", was launched by the Florida Poison Information Center-Miami during NPPW. Safe Kids Coalitions throughout south Florida helped distribute articles, memos to law enforcement partners, posters and wallet cards, in conjunction with the national release of the first poison-related "app" connecting Smartphone users with their local poison center. The campaign culminated with a March 24 press conference at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Fort Lauderdale with U.S. Representative Debbie Wasserman-Shultz announcing the release of the first app for the iPhone and her support for continued federal funding of poison centers across the United States.



From left, Jennifer Belyeu, Safe Kids Coordinator for Broward County, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman-Shultz, and Wendy Stephan, Health Educator, FPIC-Miami.

(SEE HIGHLIGHTS PAGE 6)

AAPCC Releases 2009 Report; Medications Remain Leading Cause of Poisoning Deaths

Medications remained the leading cause of poisoning deaths in 2009, with most poisoning fatalities occurring among adults, according to a new report by the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

In all, U.S. poison centers took more than 4.2 million calls in 2009, treating more than 2.4 million poison exposures and answering more than 1.6 million questions about poisons.

The report, based on data from 2009 calls to U.S. poison centers, found that sedatives/hypnotics/antipsychotics; cardiovascular drugs, opioids and acetaminophen combinations were most frequently associated with poison-related deaths. In all, poison centers reported 1,158 poison-related fatalities in 2009.

Children younger than six were involved in the majority of all poison exposures reported to poison centers in 2009, but accounted for just 1.8 percent of poison-related fatalities that year. Most fatalities occurred in people between the ages of 20 and 59.

More than 91 percent of all poison exposures occurred in a residence. Most patients were treated at home: More than 72 percent of calls from the general public were man-



aged at home, meaning patients avoided costly emergency care.

Among other findings in the report:

- The top five substance classes most frequently involved in all human exposures were analgesics (11.7 percent); cosmetics/personal care products (7.7 percent); household cleaning substances (7.4 percent); sedatives/hypnotics/antipsychotics (5.8 percent); foreign bodies/toys/miscellaneous (4.3 percent).
- While 91.19 percent of all poison exposures occurred in the home, poison exposures also occurred in the workplace (1.51 percent); in school (1.26 percent) and in restaurants or food service establishments (.24 percent).

The report is based on information from the National Poison Data System (NPDS), which tracks every call made to a U.S. poison center in near real-time, serving as a national resource to collect and monitor U.S. poison exposure and serving as one of the few real-time national surveillance systems in place to track health trends. The full report is available online at www.aapcc.org.

Protect Yourself from Carbon Monoxide

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

The Florida Poison Information Center Network and the American Association of Poison Control Centers offer these tips for combating carbon monoxide:

- Never use a charcoal or gas grill inside a house, garage, closed-in porch or tent.
- Do not use charcoal in the fireplace.
- Have your furnace inspected and adjusted before every heating season.
- When using the fireplace to burn wood or gas logs, make sure the flue is open and the chimney is not blocked. Have your chimney, fireplace, and wood stoves, and flues inspected before every heating season.
- Do not use a kerosene heater or gas logs for heat unless you have a working carbon monoxide alarm.
- Never use a generator inside your home – not even in

the basement, garage or porch.

Keep it outside, far from the house.

- Never use a gas stove or oven to heat the house.
- Never leave a car running inside a garage, even if the garage door is open.
- Never sleep in a parked car while the engine is running.
- Get a carbon monoxide detector, with a battery back-up system, for your home. If you have a big house, get more than one detector.



For questions about poisons, call your local poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

An App to Put You in Touch with Your Poison Center

You scan coupon barcodes, check-in at your favorite restaurant, and update your Facebook status from your iPhone. Why not call your poison center with it, too?

The American Association of Poison Control Centers has released its first Poison Help app. This free iPhone app will allow users to click on the Poison Help logo to connect to their poison center 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The AAPCC will also be developing apps for Droids, Blackberries and Windows-based smartphones.

The app also offers poison prevention tips and connect users with the American Association of Poison Control Center's website.

It helps users get in touch with the expert nurses, pharmacists, or doctors at your poison center who can help you with your poisoning emergency or question.

- Did your toddler invade the vitamin bottle?

- Did you get bitten by an outdoor critter?
- Did your aging parent take an extra dose or the wrong dose of their medicine?

Use the poison control center app to contact poison center experts immediately, because in a poisoning emergency, there's no time to waste. The iPhone app is available at www.aapcc.org or through your app marketplace, with other apps following in the coming months.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers advises those not using smartphones to consider programming the 1-800-222-1222 Poison Center Helpline number into their cell phone address books or contact lists.

Poison centers offer free, confidential advice from medical professionals and this app gives smartphone users another opportunity to keep the poison center number close at hand.

Making Real Estate Transactions Poison-Free

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- If you see a leak, remember that mold is a possibility.

Work hard to maintain a dry home, and quickly repair leaks and other sources of moisture in the home. That may also mean drying all surfaces, using a dehumidifier, increasing ventilation and washing moldy items with a bleach and water solution.

Pests

- Look for entry points like gaps surrounding pipes and holes in walls.
- Identify sources of food, water and shelter. Pests cannot survive without all three. Make your abode inhospitable to them.

- If you see evidence of pests, know the enemy – identify the specific type of pest that is in your home. Use integrated pest-management techniques to rid the house of pests (use non-chemical methods first). If you need to use pesticides, read the label first and take precautions or hire a professional.

Radon

- Test your home for radon. What you can't see can have long-term health consequences, and radon is odorless and colorless.
- Pick up a testing kit at your local hardware store or hire a professional to test for radon. Check with your health department for a list of qualified professionals who can test and/or fix radon problems in your home.



This newsletter is brought to you by the Florida Poison Information Center Network and was produced with assistance from the American Association of Poison Control Centers and local poison centers around the country.

When you dial 1-800-222-1222, your call is answered by a medical professional with special training in poisoning management. Help is fast, free, confidential, and available 24-hours a day, every day.

FPICN NPPW 2011 Highlights

At far right, FPIC - Miami's campaign ad for launching the first poison-related "app" connecting Smartphone users with their local poison center;

right, FPIC - Tampa's CSPI Jeronimo LaBoy was helping at a poison center exhibit when his grandson, Adrian stopped by to visit; bottom left, Paige Pruitt, RN, (right) presents Chelsea Claverie an award for creating the 1st Place for the Older Division's



winning poster for the Poison Prevention Council's 2011 NPPW Poster Contest; bottom right includes a printed PSA for awareness on the interior and exterior of buses as well as bulletin boards in several counties that FPIC - Jacksonville services.



Florida's three poison centers, comprising the Florida Poison Information Center Network, are accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers. The Florida Poison Information Center Network serves Florida's residents and health care professionals and consists of poison centers located in Jacksonville, Miami, and Tampa. The Florida Poison Information Center Network is a cooperative effort between the three poison centers and their affiliated medical and academic institutions, including Shands Jacksonville Medical Center, University of Florida College of Medicine; Jackson Memorial Hospital, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine; and Tampa General Hospital. The Poison Center Network is primarily funded by a grant from Children's Medical Services, Florida Department of Health.

florida's poison centers
Children's Medical Services